



Cottenham Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110604
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278466
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lamb's Lane
School category	Community		CB4 8TA
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01954 250227
Number on roll	533	Fax number	01954 273321
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Sue Arnold
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Jan Wright

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005	Inspection number 278466
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school near Cambridge. Most year groups contain approximately seventy-five pupils. A considerable proportion of pupils enter and leave the school throughout the year. A significant minority of pupils are from travelling communities. Levels of free school meals are below average. When the youngest pupils start school their levels of knowledge and understanding are similar to those expected for 4-year-olds. Overall the school has a below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nine out of ten pupils are from White British families. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils are reported as not having English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Cottenham Primary is an outstanding school and sits in the heart of its community. The leadership and management of the school are amazingly effective. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's leadership are excellent. Teaching is outstanding and so pupils achieve very well. Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly dedicated and care very effectively for pupils. Pupils behave exceptionally well. The partnership with parents is incredibly effective. One parent says, 'It is an incredibly responsive school.' Another parent says, 'I can not believe my good luck at finding such an excellent school.' The pupils are given a particularly good start in the reception classes because of very effective teaching and leadership. Standards by the start of Year 1 are slightly above average. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked even in reception classes. Assessment activities are used effectively but self-evaluation by pupils could be further developed. The attendance of some pupils is well below average. Interesting activities are planned and pupils enjoy special weeks, for example, dedicated to developing pupils' music or art skills. Many pupils have opportunities to attend an enormously wide range of after school and lunch time clubs. The school offers outstanding value for money. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding. For example, standards in Year 6 are now higher and were well above average in 2004 tests. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 6 are above expectations because of the good use of the ICT suite, interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise. The school is in a very good position to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve some pupils' attendance so that they come to school nearly all the time.
- Continue to develop pupils' skills in self-evaluation so that they are even clearer about what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' standards and achievement are outstanding. Overall, most pupils achieve very well whilst at the school. When pupils enter the school their levels of knowledge and understanding are average overall. They get off to a really good start in the reception classes and attain slightly above average standards by the beginning of Year 1. The majority of pupils make effective progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2004 standards were above average in English and mathematics. Overall standards for boys and girls are similar. Over recent years the school has maintained above average standards. School data demonstrates that pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. The school is in line to meet its challenging targets. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils and structure pupils learning very effectively. Standards of science, reading and mathematics are particularly strong.

Standards do vary slightly from year to year and were a little lower in the 2005 English tests because nearly a quarter of the pupils entered the school part way through Years 3 to 6. Standards in ICT are above expectations. For instance, many Year 6 pupils use computers effectively to carry out complex calculations in spreadsheets. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make effective progress with regard to their specific targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good overall, with some outstanding features. The school judged this area of the school's work to be outstanding. However, the inspection team did not agree with the school's self-evaluation because overall attendance is well below the national average. This is mostly because some pupils move to different communities during the school year. The school makes every effort to encourage good attendance. Pupils behave incredibly well, are enthusiastic about their work and have excellent relationships with all staff and one another. The school makes pupils feel good about themselves and as a result they love learning and make very good progress overall. Pupils know that their opinions are valued. For example, they expressed their concerns about the lack of interesting things to do at lunchtimes. Consequently, new playground equipment was purchased and now pupils enjoy playing constructively together with a fabulous range of equipment. This good provision makes a substantial contribution to pupils' social development and helps to ensure calm and trouble-free play and lunchtimes. Pupils learn effectively what to do to stay safe and they understand how healthy food and exercise are important. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy accepting responsibility and helping others in their community well. Pupils have impressive basic numeracy, literacy and ICT skills and are encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills that will make their future economic well-being more likely. For example, they organise and manage events to raise money for the community project 'Make Poverty History'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There are many opportunities for reflection in assembly and discussion time in class groups all helps to foster pupils' spiritual awareness and self-esteem. Pupils learn about the different cultures effectively in lessons as well as through visits and visitors to the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are lively and interesting as teachers use interactive whiteboards and other resources imaginatively to promote an enjoyment of learning. Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully to ensure that they meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught very successfully and there are excellent opportunities for pupils to extend these skills in other subjects. Significant strengths of teaching include the way teachers ensure

that pupils know very specifically what they need to do to be successful in each lesson and use talking partners particularly effectively. Teachers use assessment information very well to guide their teaching and to check that pupils are on track to achieve the standards of which they are capable. In some classes pupils evaluate their own work well but in others this is a relatively new activity. Recent initiatives on self-assessment are helping to raise standards, although these are not consistently effective across all classes. The very good teamwork between teachers and support staff help pupils to be included fully and achieve well, especially those with educational difficulties and those from the travelling community.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is an excellent curriculum. The work pupils do is very rich and varied with effective time given to all subjects. The pupils achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Furthermore, the school works effectively to ensure that pupils' days are varied. For instance, design and technology projects allows pupils in Years 5 and 6 to design, make and evaluate their model air raid shelters. Good provision for the arts includes units of work on famous artists where pupils create very effective portraits in the style of Picasso. The school was awarded 'Artsmark' bronze in 2005. An outstanding range of after school and lunch time clubs are enjoyed by pupils. Apart from music and sports club, pupils can join drama, chess, gardening and ICT clubs. Pupils have many opportunities to sing and perform in musical productions and activities

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and work hard to provide an outstanding level of care and support. The school works very successfully with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the support that they need. For example, some pupils benefit from participating in music and play therapy. This innovative support makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils from the travelling communities are superbly supported by knowledgeable and committed staff. This first-rate level of care makes pupils feel very well looked after. Pupils feel valued and know they have someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Child protection arrangements are in place and understood by all staff. The school makes all required checks on adults working in the school so that pupils are kept as safe as they can be. Younger children are helped to settle in very quickly when they join the school, and older children are well prepared for their move up to secondary school so they feel positive and confident about the change.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Particularly clear guidance by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is a key factor in maintaining high standards

and improving the quality of education provided by the school. The headteacher, working in a very effective and influential partnership with her deputy and senior management team, provides outstanding leadership. This is valued highly by staff, parents and pupils and is reflected clearly in the very good progress made since the last inspection. The headteacher has created a very strong staff team that shares her vision of a successful school that includes fully pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. Her calm and purposeful manner is very effective in encouraging and supporting staff to ensure that the school provides a high quality education. Staff training and professional development have a high priority to ensure that the school supports all pupils successfully. The school's self-evaluation is of a very good quality and has assisted the school to make significant improvements since the last inspection. The work of the school is rigorously checked and evaluated by staff, governors, parents and pupils. This contributes to a very effective school improvement plan that provides a clear direction to the school's work. Governors have a very good understanding of their roles. Recent changes in the governing body have resulted in their very effective involvement in influencing the school's development, for example, through visits into school to check progress on key improvement priorities. Governors use funds very successfully to support improvements and to evaluate their effectiveness. The outstanding leadership, together with the strong team of staff and governors and parental support, puts the school in a very good position to continue to flourish.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us find out about your school. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch an assembly. Very good things about your school include the fact that: - you work really hard in lessons and behaviour is exceptionally good - many of you work at high standards in mathematics, reading and science and have improved your writing skills considerably - teachers and teaching assistants care for you very well and help you to do good work - your headteacher and deputy headteacher have particularly good ideas about ways to improve the school - most teachers teach incredibly well - lunchtime and after school clubs are superb - computers and interactive whiteboards are helping you to improve your ICT work. We have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. We hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are: - improve the number of days most children come to school so that they are here nearly all the time - continue to help you get better at improving your work. Keep up the extremely good work at Cottenham Primary School.